

Special Milk Program

The Special Milk Program (SMP) provides cash reimbursement for each half-pint of milk served to eligible children. This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is administered by the Maryland State Department of Education's School and Community Nutrition Programs Branch. The purpose of the program is to encourage the consumption of fluid milk by children in schools, child care centers, summer camps, and similar nonprofit institutions.



Eligibility

All children up to the age of 21 who are enrolled in participating public or nonprofit private schools, and all children up to the age of 19 who are enrolled in participating day care centers, summer camps, and similar nonprofit institutions are eligible.

Any nonprofit school or child care institution or similar institution devoted to the care and training of children may sponsor a SMP. However, in no instance may a site participate in another meal program funded by the USDA.

Homeless Shelters whose primary care is to provide shelter and meals to homeless families may also participate.

How Does The SMP Operate

Participating schools and institutions are required to operate their milk program on a nonprofit basis when milk is sold to children.

There are three options in choosing how a school or institution may operate:

- They may sell milk to all children at a set price.
- They may provide free milk to children who meet the income eligibility criteria, while selling it to all other children at a set price.
- They may provide milk at no charge to all children whose meals and/or milk is financed by tuition, boarding, camping, or other fees.

Types of Milk That Can be Offered

Any pasteurized type of unflavored or flavored milk, whole, low-fat, skim, or cultured buttermilk that meets State and local standards may be served. All milk must contain Vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration.

Federal Reimbursement

The two rates of reimbursement provided through the program are for free half-pints and paid half-pints.

Paid half-pint rate – reimbursement is based on the number of half-pints served to eligible children multiplied by the rate of reimbursement set annually by the federal government.

Free half-pint rate – Sponsors are reimbursed for the actual purchase price of milk served to eligible children.

Sponsors seeking the free half-pint reimbursement must verify the eligibility of children according to annual federal income guidelines. This is done through a parent application process.

Available Assistance

- Technical assistance and guidance to operate a SMP.
- Cash reimbursement for milk served to eligible children.
- Bonus Commodities – Summer camps only.

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